

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS'
MILLENNIAL STAR

ESTABLISHED IN 1840

“The Gospel of Jesus Christ, in its completeness, comprehends within itself those things which will help to promote not only the spiritual welfare of mankind, but also mankind’s temporal welfare.”—SYLVESTER Q. CANNON.

No. 1, Vol. 96

Thursday, January 4, 1934

Price One Penny

THE DIVINE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

ELDER RULON S. WELLS

OF THE FIRST COUNCIL OF SEVENTY

AND he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Thus wrote the Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians, reminding them of the organization that had been set up by Christ for His Church on earth, and of the divine purpose of that organization.

In these latter days, with the restoration of the Gospel, the Church of Christ has been set up once more as it was formerly constituted. Apostles, high priests, seventies, elders, after the order of Melchizedek; and bishops, priests, teachers and deacons, after the order of Aaron, are the orders of the Priesthood that exist at present, as they existed of old; and for the same divine purpose. But, in addition to these Priesthood quorums, we have a great many more institutions organized within the Church. The Church itself is divided into stakes and wards, missions and branches of Zion, all with their presiding officers. Also active are a great many helps in government—auxiliaries—that have been established: Relief Societies, Sabbath Schools, Young Men’s and Young Ladies’ Mutual Improvement Associations, and Primary Associations. We have our seminaries and Church schools, and we have a great many committees operating in this great latter-day work.

What is the occasion for all of this activity and wonderful work? What an army of workers it involves—workers that are engaged in the work of the Lord among the children of men!

What are the conditions that make it necessary for such a work to be carried on?

Thousands of years ago, a prophet of the Lord, looking down into the future, saw the conditions which prevail to-day. Said he: "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant." The Prophet Isaiah, in this statement, gave a very lucid explanation of the conditions that prevail to-day which make necessary the work of the Lord that is being carried on among the children of God upon the earth. But what is the goal toward which these servants of God are working?

The earth is defiled at the present under the hands of its inhabitants. Of course, the earth would not be defiled if the inhabitants were all right; but because they have transgressed the laws of God, because they have changed the ordinances of His Gospel, because they have broken that everlasting covenant which God made with His children before the foundations of this earth were laid—because of these things is the earth defiled.

WHAT is the destiny of the earth? Does its defilement mark the conclusion of God's work upon it? Not by any manner of means! There is a better destiny for this earth. The tenth article of our faith states our belief that this earth is to be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory—the celestial glory of God that was once upon this planet before it was defiled by the wickedness of its inhabitants. In the Doctrine and Covenants we read an explanation of what is going to take place, and why:

And the spirit and the body are the soul of man. And the resurrection from the dead is the redemption of the soul. And the redemption of the soul is through him that quickeneth all things, in whose bosom it is decreed that the poor and the meek of the earth shall inherit it. Therefore, it must needs be sanctified from all unrighteousness, that it may be prepared for the celestial glory.

To be sanctified from all unrighteousness that it may be prepared for a celestial glory—that is the destiny of the earth. How can the earth be sanctified if its inhabitants remain vile, or wicked, or transgressors of the law? It cannot! It must be sanctified by its inhabitants themselves becoming sanctified. It must be prepared under them for the celestial glory. That is the word of the Lord given to the Prophet Joseph Smith. That is the work that we in the Church of Christ are endeavouring to carry out. That is why we have the quorums of the Priesthood; that is why this Church has been organized; that is why we send out our missionaries to all parts of the world, carrying the Gospel message; that is why we are organized into stakes, wards, and missions of Zion; that is why we have our auxiliary organizations. This whole latter-day work is based upon bringing to pass that mighty purpose of the Almighty of sanctifying this earth from all unrighteousness.

The Lord has named His Church in these last days the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He has permitted His followers to be called "saints." What is a saint? A saint is a sanctified being, one who has been sanctified from all unrighteousness. Are we that? The Lord has placed in our hands the

means by which we may become that, so that we can carry on toward fulfilling our great responsibility and destiny. Let us consider some of these means.

First and foremost, of course, of the things we must do in order to sanctify ourselves from all unrighteousness is to take the initial step into the Church and kingdom of God. Faith in God, repentance of sin, and baptism by immersion for the remission of sin—what a wonderful preparation! And then we receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. What can sanctify the souls of men more than that! Oh, my brethren and sisters, secure to yourselves the gift of the Holy Ghost. Get the Spirit of God and keep it, and your soul shall be sanctified; and it is sanctified so long as that spirit prevails within you, and you are entitled to be called a saint of God.

What makes us holy? Why are we called saints? The Lord appeared to the Prophet Moses in a burning bush, and as Moses approached that burning bush the Lord said unto him: "Remove the sandals from off thy feet, for the ground whereon thou standest is holy ground." What made it holy? God was there. What makes the Temple a holy place? God is there by His Holy Spirit. What makes a man or woman a saint of God? God is there with him or her.

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

That is the way the Lord proposes to sanctify your soul from all unrighteousness. Get the Spirit of God and keep it.

THIS, of course, is fundamental. All other steps, and they are many, are merely so many concrete examples of these fundamental principles of the Gospel; and all of them have the same purpose in view, namely: "The sanctifying of this earth from all unrighteousness that it may be prepared for the celestial glory."

The Sacrament meeting gives wonderful opportunity for sanctifying development; yet many fail to appreciate its true significance. "Oh," some say, "I do not like to go to Sacrament meeting; there is going to be no great speaker there to-night. I believe I will stay home and read a good book." They do not understand!

"Good speakers" will not save your souls. But, if you will go to the table of the Lord and, with clean hearts and hands, partake of the sacred emblems, witnessing before the Lord that you do always remember Him, then are you eating and drinking eternal life unto your very souls, and sanctifying them from all unrighteousness. For as we participate in the sacred ordinance—in the spirit that the Lord intended we should—we renew our covenants with God, we determine to be more worthy of membership in His fold, we forgive as we would be forgiven, we open our hearts in worship of our Father. What a wonderful means of sanctifying our souls from all unrighteousness!

Another thing: Observe the Word of Wisdom, the Lord's law of health. Take proper care of your body, a component part of your eternal soul. Keep it clean and wholesome so that the Spirit of God may dwell in it. Let the Word of Wisdom help you to refrain from evil habits of every kind.

And again, the payment of our tithes and offerings is a means of sanctifying our souls from all unrighteousness. We are told in the scriptures that the love of money is the root of all evil. What will men and women not do in order to get money? They will lie for it, they will cheat for it, they will misrepresent, they will steal, they will kill for it.

The law of tithing lays the axe at the very root of all this evil. It helps us to overcome that soul-destroying vice, avarice, that is playing havoc among the children of men, the cause of all our wars and contentions, the thing that stands in the way of the establishment of peace on earth. Does the Church need the tithes of the people? Most certainly it does, for carrying on this great gigantic work that is now being accomplished through the servants of the Lord. But it does not need them like we need to pay them for our own salvation, for the sanctifying and the purifying of our hearts. The law of tithing fulfilled according to the law of God will overthrow soul-destroying vice.

I will undertake to consider only one other phase of our religion which has for its purpose the same end, the sanctifying of the earth that it may be prepared for its celestial glory. I allude to prayer as a means of sanctifying our souls.

PRAYER is an exercise in all the fundamental principles of life and salvation. It is an exercise in faith, for no man cometh to God except he believeth that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Prayer is faith; it is also turning our backs upon evil, because whenever we come to God of necessity we must turn our backs upon evil. Prayer, then, is repentance, too.

The Lord has commanded that we shall pray without ceasing. Does the Lord mean that? Absolutely yes! Always down on our knees? No, He did not say that. Always offering words of prayer? No, He did not say that. Then what is prayer? Prayer is a condition of the heart. We oftentimes sing, "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed." It is an emanation of the heart, and the Lord expects it to be constant.

When we stop to think of it, we are always praying, in spite of ourselves. Some pray very much differently than others. But faith is a part of the divine image in which we have been created; and prayer is an exercise of faith.

But the trouble often is that we do not always pray to God, although we may always be praying. The moment we cease praying to God, we begin praying to the adversary of our souls. What are you praying for? Is it a prayer to God or a prayer to mammon? Are you praying for the sordid things of this world, for the gratification of evil desires, or unworthy ambitions; or are you praying for the triumph of God's work, for the sanctifying of His people, for the restoration of this earth to its paradisiacal glory, for your own eternal salvation and a reunion with your loved ones that have gone before? What are the desires of your heart. You may rest assured that whatever is there will find expression in your prayers, uttered, or unexpressed.

Whom shall we pray for? For the general authorities of the Church? Yes, pray for President Grant, God's mouthpiece unto His people, the prophet, seer, and revelator. Pray for him that he may receive the revelations of God, that he may guide the

people according to the will of God. Pray for his counselors that they may unite with him, and for the chosen Twelve that they may be as one man in all things pertaining to the upbuilding of God's work. Pray for all of your Church leaders, for they carry mighty responsibilities. Pray for the leaders of nations, too. Pray that they may be led toward international peace.

Pray for your loved ones that they may not wander into forbidden paths, that they may walk in the straight and narrow way that leadeth into life eternal; and pray that God may hold them as in the hollow of His hand, that no harm or evil may befall them. Their lives are precious in the sight of God.

Pray for the sick and the afflicted. Exercise all the faith in your heart in their behalf.

BUT there should accompany every prayer that we offer up unto the Lord this reservation: "Thy will, not mine, be done." Did not the Saviour teach us this in the hour of His greatest trial when He said: "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." Is it not also in the Lord's prayer that we should seek to do the will of God? The Lord knows what we need better than we know ourselves; we should know and understand that, and trust in His wisdom.

There is someone else I think you should pray for—him that despitefully uses you. One says: "How can I love my neighbour who despitefully uses me, who cheats me, swindles me, takes advantage of me in every business deal, maligns me and does me all manner of mischief. How can I love him with all my heart?"

I do not know what effect your prayer is going to have upon that neighbour of yours who despitefully uses you, but I do know this: such prayer will do you good, it will cast hatred out of your heart. We must forgive those who trespass against us. No matter how despitefully they may use you, that should be your attitude toward them. The Lord has said: "I the Lord will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men." That is the spirit of this Gospel—to forgive all men. Do not hold hatred in your heart. Such hatred destroys your own soul and prevents you from sanctifying and preparing yourself for the celestial glory.

Now, my brothers and sisters, these and many other principles and practices we are carrying on in the Church. In this organized capacity, all we do has for its eventual purpose the preparation for the coming of our Lord, for that glorious day when only righteousness shall prevail upon this earth; and when we shall be prepared to receive our Lord and dwell with Him through the endless ages of eternity. Ours is the responsibility to bring about this ultimate destiny of the earth—its sanctification from all unrighteousness.

May we all be numbered among that happy throng that shall thus serve the Lord, I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.—(Digest of a sermon delivered in the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah, November 26th, 1933.)

IF men do not comprehend the character of God they do not comprehend themselves.—JOSEPH SMITH.

SELECTIVE READING

ELDER G. HOMER DURHAM

HAPPY is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise thereof is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. (Proverbs 3: 13, 14.)

During the month of November just past, tens of thousands paid their shillings at Sunderland House, London, to see the *Sunday Times* Book Exhibition. Here was displayed the accumulated experience of five hundred years in English letters. Witnesses, from Caxton's hand-press edition of 1477, to the latest product of electrotype, bore silent testimony of England's literary greatness. A ramble through the intervening years, from the first-fruits of the rude equipment of Caxton to the present day, taught an impressive lesson in finding "wisdom."

In order to utilize, fully, the splendid realm for development afforded by the written word, a visitor to the Exhibition was made to realize the necessity of exercising *choice* in his reading. Standing face to face with such chosen specimens of English literary art; seeing on one hand the Authorized Version, dressed as James I saw it come from the press in 1611; comparing a First Folio Shakespeare with the *New Oxford Dictionary*, and the newest cook-book; visualizing the conditions under which the exhibited manuscripts, from Byron to Shaw, were penned, was an overwhelming acknowledgment of the above fact. One cannot read everything that has managed to *live* through five centuries; more difficult is it to select good reading from the products of to-day.

The Mission M. I. A. Boards have only recently completed the Association's Reading Course for the current season. In selecting some twenty-odd volumes from the vast field at their disposal, the Boards have exercised great care and all the wisdom at their command. This has been done in the hope that a perusal of Reading Course books will prove to be an experience of immersion into the waters of understanding. Time spent among these faithful friends—good books—will result in growth.

Here is wisdom: He who would have merchandise better than silver, gain finer than gold, let him diligently apply himself to the following list. He will increase in wisdom and understanding. One should read at least three of the books in order to come up to M. I. A. requirements (see the *Branch Achievement Programme*).

M. I. A. READING COURSE, 1933-34

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| 1. <i>The Forsyte Saga</i> | - - - - - | J. Galsworthy |
| 2. <i>The Proselyte</i> | - - - - - | Susan Ertz |
| 3. <i>Thelma</i> | - - - - - | Marie Corelli |
| 4. <i>The Innocents Abroad</i> | - - - - - | Mark Twain |
| 5. <i>Jane Eyre</i> | - - - - - | Charlotte Bronte |
| 6. <i>The Promised Land</i> | - - - - - | Sir Gilbert Parker |
| 7. <i>It Happened in Peking</i> | - - - - - | Louise Jordan Milne |
| 8. <i>Red Lily and Chinese Jade</i> | - - - - - | Louise Jordan Milne |
| 9. <i>Kim</i> | - - - - - | Rudyard Kipling |
| 10. <i>A Tale of Two Cities</i> | - - - - - | Charles Dickens |
| 11. <i>My First Sixty Years</i> | - - - - - | Lady Maud Warrender |
| 12. <i>Queen Victoria</i> | - - - - - | Lytton Strachey |

13. *Kidnapped* - - - - - R. L. Stevenson
14. *The Life of the Bee* - - - - - M. Maeterlinck
15. *The Winning of Barbara Worth* - Harold Bell Wright
16. *Little Women* - - - - - Louise M. Allcott
17. *The Way to Perfection* - - - Joseph Fielding Smith
18. *Added Upon* - - - - - Nephi Anderson
19. *The Pearl of Great Price* - - Standard Church Works
20. (Three plays selected from the following count as one book)

"Strife," "Escape," "The Silver Box," "The Fugitive," "The Skin Game," John Galsworthy. "St. Joan," "The Apple Cart," "Mrs. Warren's Profession," "The Man of Destiny," "Back to Methuselah," George Bernard Shaw.

You will notice from the list, that there has been provision made for readers of all ages; Bee-Hives, Gleaners, M Men, and adults should spend many happy hours among the varied colourful pages of the M. I. A. Reading Course. Such time, thus spent, is a process that "develops the gifts within us" in unlooked for ways. Let us all have this joy! Go to the nearest library at once, and begin!

THE LEGEND OF QUETZALCOATL

ELDER NORMAN C. PIERCE

[Readers of the "Star" will remember Quetzalcoatl (kate sal qua tl) as one of the deified personages mentioned in "Confirmatory Evidences of Mormonism" in the issue of December 21st. Those whose interest in Quetzalcoatl was aroused, will find the following legend an interesting continuation. The author, a one-time student of the National University at Mexico City, has visited the ancient ruined cities in that locality, and is well qualified to discuss his subject.—THE EDITOR.]

WITHOUT doubt the most beautiful and authentic legend of all Indian folklore is that of "The Great White God With a Beard," the supreme deity of the Mexican Indians, Quetzalcoatl, who is the same deity known by different names among many Indian tribes throughout the continent and the islands.

Quetzalcoatl, according to the legend, visited the early inhabitants of Mexico and Central America. He appeared out of the East and was known as the god of the air and rain, that which made life to all possible. Quetzalcoatl means "Serpent decked with feathers," and this symbol of him is everywhere in evidence in Indian shrines, both ancient and modern. The legend relates that he was a high Priest of Tollan, and that he was a man with a white skin, a high stature, a broad forehead, large eyes, long black hair, and a bushy beard. For propriety's sake he always wore ample garments. A time came in his life when he was crucified and died for his people, his flesh was broken by arrows and spears—but he lived again! He was a god!

As stated, Quetzalcoatl came out of the East, and, although a deity, he dwelt among the common people and taught them the things they should know. He taught them virtue, penitence and fasting, and discouraged animal and human sacrifice; he showed them how to become skilled artisans, teaching them such things as metallurgy and agriculture. He gave freely of wisdom, and to those who had faith he granted immunity from distress and

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 4, 1934

EDITORIAL

OUT THE OLD—IN THE NEW

THE year 1933 has gone, and 1934 has come. "What has the New Year in store for us?" is a question we all ask. But none of us, fortunately, can answer. For if we were assured of success we probably would be less deserving of success, the reasons being readily apparent; and if we knew that discouragements, troubles, and failures awaited us we would likely lose heart, thus making these adversities more severe. A moment's thought will convince us that it is best as it is—that a kind Providence wisely withholds our future from us.

And so, we face the New Year with hope, and it is perfectly right that we should. And though "There is a destiny that shapes our ends, rough hew them as we may," we know from experience that our future is largely in our own keeping. If we have the will to succeed, if we observe the rules of success, then failure will not be our portion. It may be, however, that the goal we set up for ourselves shall not be attained. It often happens that our desired goal has not been conceived in wisdom. Its attainment would be of no benefit or blessing to us. And so, an all-wise Providence in His mercy sometimes withholds greatly desired ends. For this all of us have had occasion to thank Him when fuller knowledge has convinced us of the value in what He has done.

We shall not undertake to state the rules of success. They may not be the same for every individual, though there are elements that are common to every set of rules. Success to a Latter-day Saint is measured by a yard stick that a sinner would reject. Attainment of an objective would be certain success to some; to the eyes of a saint many objectives would be damnable. And so, the type of success we have in mind is an achievement that adds to the joy of living. And the life of everyone who believes in and accepts Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of the world is full of opportunities for such achievements. Hence, everyone who has been blessed with the gift of faith (the Apostle Paul wrote that faith is a gift of God: Ephesians 2: 8) may be highly successful. It is simply a matter of the will.

Again, the type of success we have in mind does not admit of any complaint against the providences of God. Recently certain newspapers published a report showing that in 1932 the birth rate was lower and the suicide rate higher in England than in previous years. Suicide spells a very lamentable and sinful

failure. No Latter-day Saint of sound mind can ever be guilty of suicide. For all Latter-day Saints the thought of suicide is abhorrent—the act is a rebellion against God. It means the guilty person refuses to accept of God's providences. It means that Satan has captured a human soul. Of course, we deeply sympathize with the individual, but condemn the act.

Suffering may be very hard to bear, yet it is often a blessing—a blessing in disguise, it may truthfully be said. Hence, suffering serves a useful purpose in the divine economy. At times it may not carry the slightest taint of failure. Again it may; for it may be the inevitable penalty of broken law. The Lord has given great promises touching health as a reward for the complete observance of the Word of Wisdom. Good health is, then, dependent upon obeying the laws of health. Fear of the consequences—suffering—of broken laws has a wholesome effect. Some writer has said that if we can really sympathize with suffering we must have suffered. Suffering, then, may mellow, refine, sweeten what would be an otherwise hard and haughty human soul.

Yes, suffering has its place in the scheme of things. It serves a purpose even though the sufferer may be entirely free from the taint of sin. But suffering and success are not antagonistic entities. The joy of living—the reward of sacrifice and service, one or both—does not ban suffering. Among the gentlest and sweetest souls are sometimes found those who suffer much. A person that accepts his lot, does his best, loving both God and man, is a success and will experience a joy in living.

May every pure-minded and honest-hearted soul have the strength, the courage, and the will to achieve success during the year 1934.—M.

CONFIRMATORY EVIDENCES OF "MORMONISM"

BAPTISM EARLY IN AMERICA

IN the *Star* of December 21st, mention was made of the surprising customs and beliefs which Catholic missionaries found in America in their proselyting efforts after Columbus's discovery in 1492. One of the most striking of these was the practice of baptism. The meaning of the ordinance, and the way it was performed led those early Fathers to ascribe its institution either to the devil, or to some representative of the Gospel from the Church at Jerusalem—probably the Apostle Thomas. D. G. Brinton tells us:

The astonishment of the Romanist missionaries rose to horror when they discovered among various nations a rite of baptism of appalling similarity to their own, connected with the imposing of a name, done avowedly for the purpose of freeing from inherent sin, believed to produce a regeneration of the spiritual nature; nay, in more than one instance

called by an indigenous (local) word signifying "to be born again."^{*} Such a rite was of immemorial antiquity among the Cherokees (a tribe of Indians in the Eastern United States), Aztecs, Mayas and Peruvians." (*Myths of the New World*, 1868, pp. 125-26.)

Of the remote antiquity of this practice we are also assured by Bancroft,[†] and by DeRoo, who says:

Christian missionaries and other writers of that time (of the Conquest by Spain) assure that baptism—to all intents the sacrament of baptism—was administered in several American districts from time immemorial." (*History of America Before Columbus*, vol. 1, p. 466.)

Sahagun, the most important authority concerning the Aztec religion of Mexico, and who lived contemporaneously with the conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards, gives us this concerning the rite of baptism among the Aztecs:

The one baptizing sprinkled water on the head of the infant saying, "O, my child, take and receive water of the Lord of the world, which is our life, it is to wash and to purify; may these drops remove the sin which was given to thee before the creation of the world, since all of us are under its power." . . . The rite was concluded with: "Now is he purified and cleansed afresh, and our mother the water again bringeth him into the world." (*Historia de Nueva Espana*, lib. 6, cap. 37.)

In regard to the manner of baptism and the age of those baptized, Brinton tells us:

In Peru the child was immersed in the fluid. . . . In either country sprinkling could take the place of immersion. The Cherokees believe that unless the rite is punctually performed when the child is three days old it will inevitably die." (*Myths of the New World*, p. 128.)

Kastner, an authority, also speaks of immersion.[‡] J. Eric Thompson wrote (1931) that among the Maya, children were baptized when about twelve years old.[§]

That baptism was not just a formal ceremony is shown by the respect and meaning which was attached to it in Yucatan and in Central America. Bishop Landa, a bishop of Yucatan, who wrote about the middle of the sixteenth century on the religious beliefs of the Mayas, says this: ||

They have such a respect for baptism that those who have sins on their consciences or who feel themselves inclined to commit sin, confess to the priest in order to be in a state to receive baptism. . . . They believe that they receive therefrom a disposition inclined to good conduct, that it guarantees them from all temptations of the devil, with respect to temporal things, and by means of this rite and a good life they hope to secure salvation.

This aid made possible in leading a good life and in obtaining "salvation" is told also by DeRoo:

It was the duty of all the Mayas to have their children baptized, for

^{*}Also stated by Herrera, *History of America*, quoted in *Scrapbook of Mormon Literature*, vol. 2, p. 288; Gann and Thompson, *History of the Maya*, p. 140.

[†]Bancroft, *Native Races*, vol. 3, p. 119 (quoted by Lesuer, *Indian Legends*, p. 151).

[‡]Quoted by DeRoo, *History of America Before Columbus*, p. 466.

[§]Gann and Thompson, *History of the Maya*, p. 140.

^{||}Quoted in Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. 11, p. 529.

they believed that by this ablution they received purer nature, were protected against evil spirits and possible misfortunes. They held, moreover, that an unbaptized person, whether man or woman, could not lead a good life nor do anything well. (*History of America Before Columbus*, vol. 1, p. 467.)

From these various quotations that have come to us through historical research, it is evident that baptism was practised in America by various peoples. It is also evident that they understood baptism to be a "rebirth," cleansing them from sin and making possible a better life and salvation. But the source from whence the knowledge of such an ordinance, and its significance, came to the Indians is still a puzzle to historians.

Once more, however, Scripture holds the key. The Book of Mormon tells us that the meaning and mode of baptism was taught to the ancestors of the Indians by prophets of God (read 2 Nephi 9 : 22-24 : Moroni 6 and 8), and, indeed, the Saviour during His visit to the Nephites gave the following instructions regarding baptism :

Behold, ye shall go down and stand in the water, and in my name shall ye baptize them . . . saying : Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. And then shall ye immerse them in water, and come forth again out of the water. (3 Nephi 11 : 23-26.)

That baptism was practised in America before the Spaniards arrived there is evidence that the ordinance was given and explained to them at some previous time. Its importance in the religious life of the people is shown by the belief, in Yucatan, that it was necessary for salvation ; by the anxiety of the Cherokees to insure that baptism be performed ; and by the custom of the Mayas—that of waiting, as stated by Thompson, until the children reached an age of relative accountability before baptism. The dilemma in which the Catholic Fathers found themselves in trying to explain such a ritual among "savages" is solved by the Book of Mormon, which tells that the ancestors of the Indians were taught baptism by prophets of God, divinely commissioned to baptize, and also by Christ Himself.

The practice of baptism in America is another very striking evidence of the truth of the claims of the Book of Mormon, and a confirmatory evidence of "Mormonism."—FRANKLIN S. HARRIS, JR.

THE LEGEND OF QUETZALCOATL

(Concluded from page 7)

cured their ills and afflictions. When he wished to promulgate a law, he sent a hero whose voice could be heard a hundred leagues away, to proclaim it from the summit of Tzatzitepetl ("mountain of clamors"). Even their calendar, that causes modern science to marvel, was attributed to him.

In Quetzalcoatl's time, according to the legend, maize attained such enormous dimensions that a single ear was all a man could carry. Gourds and melons measured not less than four feet, and it was no longer necessary to dye cotton, because all colours

were produced by nature. Indian corn, singing birds and birds of brilliant plumage abounded. All men were then rich. In a word, the general belief of all tribes is that the time of Quetzalcoatl's appearance was the Golden Age of their country. And while the country was at the height of its prosperity, he disappeared by way of the ocean, saying that it was the will of higher gods that he should betake himself to another kingdom. However, he charged his followers to tell the people that he would return some day with white men, bearded like himself, and rule the people in wisdom forever.

Through the ages they waited patiently and watched carefully for his coming while priests and soothsayers prophesied the event. Finally the prophecy was thought to be fulfilled when the Europeans first touched the shores of America and the Islands. The Indians of San Salvador saw the return of this Great White God With a Beard in the coming of Columbus, the Mexicans saw him in Cortez, the Hawaiians saw him in Cook, those of the Mississippi saw him in De Soto, while the Incas saw him in Pizarro—and all were sadly, grievously disappointed, as history clearly reveals.

It is interesting to note how memory of Quetzalcoatl has been kept alive, even to this day. Everywhere beautiful temples were erected to this God, where, on periodic occasions, they would gather and have great feast in his honor. On the steps of the temple they would perform a colorful pageant depicting deaf, lame, blind and paralyzed people. These were prayed for before his image, whereupon they would enact a miracle. The dumb at once began to speak, the lame performed acrobatic feats, and the blind opened their eyes. Even effigies of him were crucified anew.

There was also a special religious order in which the individual who entered was dedicated to this God. In early infancy they were consecrated to Quetzalcoatl by being presented to the superior priest and receiving an incision in the breast. At the age of seven they entered a seminary, where, after first listening to a long moral discourse, they were exhorted to conduct themselves carefully, and to pray for the people and the nation.

Even to-day there are so many Mexicans who still believe in Quetzalcoatl, that he will even yet return and fulfill his promises, that the Mexican government declared that Quetzalcoatl must supplant the Anglicized Santa Clans as the Spirit of Christmas. And so, he it is, instead of Santa, who brings gifts to Mexican children, and reminds them that their forefathers had a white God whom they called Quetzalcoatl.

These legendary facts I gather from standard encyclopedia and the elaborate work of the eminent French archaeologist, Lucien Biart, in his book entitled, *The Aztecs*. Mr. Biart clinches his story by saying: "It is an incontestable fact that Quetzalcoatl created a new religion, based on fasting, penitence, and virtue; and certainly, he belonged to a race other than the one he civilized." The actual existence of this crucified God is further strengthened by the many stone crosses that have been found throughout Mexico and Peru. In fact, the presence of the cross, in the proportions of the Christian symbol, on so many Mexican monuments led early Catholic missionaries to believe that Christi-

anity had already been preached to the Indians, and St. Thomas was given the credit of having discovered America before Columbus.

A large stone cross was first noted at Vera Cruz (True Cross) where the Spaniards first settled, and from which they found immediate inspiration for a name, calling it "La Ciudad de la Vera Cruz (The City of the true cross)." Many more crosses were found throughout the land that gave strength to the St. Thomas belief until leading Catholic priests took it upon themselves to discourage the idea and to destroy all available evidences in support thereof.

Yet the beautiful legend of Quetzalcoatl still lives on, and the world at large is still in darkness regarding its true significance!

QUETZALCOATL IN THE SCRIPTURES

A Feathered Serpent idea: ". . . be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." (Matt. 10: 16.)

High priest of Tollan: ". . . the apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." (Heb. 3: 1.)

A voice heard over a hundred leagues away from Tzatzitepetl (the mountain of clamors): ". . . they heard a voice as if it came out of heaven—it was not a harsh voice, neither was it a loud voice . . ." (3 Nephi 11: 3.)

Golden Age: ". . . And they had all things in common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor . . . And the Lord did prosper them exceedingly in the land." (4 Nephi 1: 3-7.)

He healed: ". . . Bring them hither, and I will heal them." (3 Nephi 17: 7.)

He left saying that it was the will of higher gods that he should betake himself to another kingdom: ". . . But now I go unto the Father, and also to show myself unto the lost tribes of Israel." (3 Nephi 17: 4.)

He would return at a later day at the head of white bearded men like himself to dwell with them forever; ". . . I shall come in my glory with the powers of heaven." (3 Nephi 28: 7.)

—*Improvement Era*, December, 1933.

MANCHESTER DISTRICT CONFERENCE

"TRUTH WILL PREVAIL" was the theme of the annual Fall Conference of the Manchester District held at the Co-operative Hall, Manchester, on December 3rd. The large, attentive audience of members and friends was gratifying to the District missionaries who had spent considerable time and effort preparing for the event. A beautiful spirit was manifest throughout the conference, and many were the expressions of appreciation at its close.

An interesting feature of the morning programme was the presentation of a lovely spray of flowers to Sister Rintla Pratt Douglas by the Sunday Schools of the District. Also several ten-minute talks were given by the traveling elders and by members of the local Church Auxiliaries, during which some interesting facts regarding the several departments of Church work were intelligently discussed.

The congregation was divided at the close of the morning session; the ladies, meeting under the direction of Sister Douglas, gave to her the semi-annual report of the District Relief Societies;

the men, under President Douglas' direction, reported the progress of the Branches in the District and discussed their more pressing problems. Both President and Sister Douglas gave words of inspiration, encouragement and advice to the brethren and sisters respectively.

During the afternoon session, the General Authorities and General Officers of the Church were unanimously sustained, after which President B. Fred Pullham presented the District report. It was interesting to note that there are ten local missionaries labouring in the District, and during the past six months they have spent 570 hours tracting, 231 hours visiting investigators, and 616 hours visiting Church members. In all, they have devoted 4,232 hours to active missionary work. While thus engaged, they have distributed five copies of the Book of Mormon, 10 other Church books, 56 pamphlets and 26,191 tracts. A total of 10,533 hours has been spent in missionary work by the four traveling elders. Of this total 1,348 hours were devoted to tracting, 1,078 hours to visiting investigators, and 1,210 hours to visiting members, the remaining time having been spent in the many other branches of missionary labour. 27 copies of the Book of Mormon and 27 other Church books have been placed in the hands of those who are seeking for the truth, and 650 pamphlets and 46,417 tracts have been distributed as well. The tithing and fast offerings of the District have increased substantially during the last six months, and the future outlook is promising indeed.

Interesting and well-prepared talks on the Relief Society and the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association were capably given by Sisters Florence Alsop and Emmaline Cooper, local representatives of these important auxiliaries. Also two short addresses on M. I. A. and Primary work were delivered by Elder G. Homer Durham and Sister Nettie L. Woodbury of the Mission Office in London, which completed the afternoon programme.

The evening session, from beginning to end, was veritably a spiritual feast. After a warm welcome extended by President Pullham, Sister Douglas, in her own inimitable way, touched the hearts of all present by her kind words of counsel and encouragement, and left with her eager listeners a burning testimony which will not soon be forgotten. Elder Louis G. Robinson then told of some fine experiences that have been his while in England, and admonished the saints to continually seek after the truth, leaving his testimony as a witness to them.

The climax of the evening was the wonderfully inspirational speech made by President Douglas. The rapt attention of the audience bore silent testimony to the effectiveness of his message. He described the wonderful characters and attributes of the Presidents of our Church, and pointed out their "fruits" in order that they might be "known" as true prophets of God. He reminded the people that the Gospel is just as true when it is rejected as it is when thousands accept it, assuring them that if they will study it and conscientiously do their best to live it, they will be guided safely through the fog of doubt and uncertainty into the light of truth and happiness.

Delightful musical numbers were provided throughout the day. "Silent Night," and "O, My Father," were beautifully rendered by a ladies duet from Rochdale Branch, and two vocal solos were provided by members of the Hyde Branch. A group of Primary

children won the hearts of everyone by singing some of their Primary songs. The Oldham Branch choir also contributed to the music of the evening.

The British Mission President, James H. Douglas, presided at the conference and the auxiliary meetings were held under the direction of Sister Rintha Pratt Douglas, consulting supervisor of auxiliaries, and President of the British Mission Relief Societies. Among those present were Elders G. Homer Durham and Arthur J. Morgan and Sister Nettie L. Woodbury of the British Mission Office; retiring President Delwin M. Clawson of the Portsmouth District; Elder Louis G. Robinson of the Hull District; President Albert T. Hooper of the Bristol District; President Kent S. Bramwell and Elders Leon B. Frelmer, Donald J. Elggren and L. Dean Hickman of the Liverpool District; Elder Levi D. Hammon of the Birmingham District; and President B. Fred Pulham and Elders L. Gordon Park, Harold Sycamore and Theodore R. Lowther of the Manchester District.

ELDER L. GORDON PARK, Clerk of the Conference.

HULL DISTRICT CONFERENCE DATE SET

THE date of the Hull District Conference has been set for January 14th. By that time the chapel will be completed and ready for dedication. Saints and elders in Hull extend an invitation to members and friends throughout the mission to join them in the services that will mark this auspicious event in the history of the Hull Branch.

FROM THE MISSION FIELD

Appointment: Elder Stephen Love Dunford was appointed on December 25th, to preside over the Bristol District.

Releases: Elder Eugene Albert Hooper, of the Manchester, Liverpool, and Bristol Districts, the latter over which he presided, was released from his labours in the British Mission on December 25th. He will return to America aboard the s.s. *Washington*, sailing January 18th.

Doings in the Districts: *Birmingham*—Members of the Handsworth Branch enjoyed a delightful social evening as guests of the Branch Relief Society, Wednesday, December 14th. Supper, served at eight, was followed by an interesting programme of readings, vocal selections, and two one-act plays, "The Trials of a Producer," and "The Photographer." The play casts included Brothers George Allen, Norman Dunn, Samuel Jevons, and Sisters Winnifred Makin, Jr., Gertrude Allen, Dora Green, Gwen Jevons, Alice Collins, Winnifred Makin, Sr.

The Birmingham District bazaar was held on November 18th, at the Handsworth Chapel, under the direction of Sister Bertha Doris Collins, District Relief Society Supervisor. The Handsworth, Sparkbrook, Kidderminster, Nuneaton, and Dudley Port Branches were represented. The first part of the evening was devoted to the selling of goods; an enjoyable programme followed. Proceeds from the bazaar were distributed equally among the branches, to be used for Relief Society charity work.

At the regular Union Meeting of the District held December 16th, Auxiliary banners were awarded to the winning branches in the general auxiliary efficiency competition. To Dudley Port Branch was given the Relief Society, Genealogical Society and Primary Association Banners; to the Handsworth Branch, the Bee-Hive Banner; to the Nuneaton Branch, the M. I. A. Banner; to the Sparkbrook Branch, the Sunday School Banner. The musical programme during the session was under the direction of District M. I. A. Supervisor George Makin. A sale of refreshments and a rummage sale were conducted by the Relief Society.

Newcastle—At an impressive baptismal service, the eighth held in the District this year, Margaret Ann Morris, Charles Ray Morris, Joseph Albert Pennington, Violet Dowether Moore, and Irene Joan Roberts were baptised and confirmed members of the Church. The ordinances were performed in the Sunderland Chapel, December 6th, by local Elder Alex. M. Morris, and Robert J. Doods, a priest. Baptisms in Newcastle District this year total thirty-seven.

The Annual Relief Society Bazaar and Social of the northern branches of the District was held in the South Shields Hall, on December 7th. Under the direction of District Supervisor Sarah Ellen Oates, the affair proved to be a big success. The interesting and useful articles which adorned the many booths found purchasers among the large attendance, as did the refreshments. The social consisted of games and dancing.

Norwich—A successful Bazaar, sponsored and arranged by the Relief Society Sisters of the Lowestoft Branch, was held in the Branch Chapel, Thursday, December 14th. An interesting feature of the bazaar was a stall, under the auspices of the Primary Association, where articles made by the Primary children were displayed and sold. The sum raised during the evening was divided between the Relief Society Charity Fund and the Branch Building Fund.

Nottingham—With the purpose in mind of raising funds to make Xmas merry for less-fortunates, the district Relief Societies held a social December 2nd. Many came to enjoy the programme, games, and refreshments.

DEATHS

WHITE—Sister Jane M. C. White died at her home at Sacriston on December 5th. She was in her sixty-sixth year, and has been a member of the Church for thirty-four years. Funeral services were held on December 8th, under the direction of Elder John E. Owens. Elder Ralph J. Pomeroy dedicated the grave.

SIMPSON—Brother John Simpson, of Londonderry, died on December 20th, from the result of wounds he received when tossed by an enraged bull at his own farm, "Coxsown," Carrigans, Londonderry, about three months ago. Brother Simpson was 51 years of age, has been a member of the Church for many years. President Benjamin R. Birchall of the Free State District was at his bedside when death came.

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